

- Make sure the cheque for the entry fee is written out to the correct name and is the correct amount.
- Don't send in handwritten entries when 'typed' was specified. Ensure photocopies are legible.
- Ensure you send the entry in an A4 envelope with your return address on it.
- Make sure the title and page number are on each page and that if required, your covering page has your name, the title of the entry and your contact details on it.
- Make sure your script has been spell-checked and proofread, and the correct type-size, line-spacing, paragraph-indenting and margins have been used. Also check the font (Arial, Times New Roman, etc.) if this has been specified.

A note of warning

The Society does not recommend that organisers put conditions in their rules that give them the right to publish non-winning entries without payment.

The information provided here is of a general nature and may not be up to date. NZSA will not be liable for any reliance placed on this material and specific professional advice should be sought in any specific circumstance

Guidelines for Literary Competitions

NZ Society of Authors (PEN NZ Inc)
TE PUNI KAITUHI O AOTEAROA



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The following guidelines are for literary competitions in New Zealand. Overseas competitions will usually have similar conditions of entry and are usually quoted in the currency of the country they are held in – both entry fees and prizes. It pays to check them out with the local Writers' Organisation before entering.

Entry form and Rules

When entering a literary competition it pays to check that the conditions and rules of the competition are clearly spelled out. This includes the provision for no prize to be awarded if the judge deems no entry is of sufficient quality to win. Also, if organisers wish to vary the method of awarding prizes this should be clearly stated in the rules. If you are unclear on any point, we advise that you contact the organiser for clarification.

Once you have read and understood the rules, then, to give your entry the best chance of success, the instructions on the entry form should be followed exactly.

Organisers of competitions get frustrated when entrants do not follow their instructions.

The Entry Form

The entry form should include the following information:

- The name of the competition.
- What type of competition it is – poetry, short story, essay, radio play, first page of a novel, for example.
- The categories of the competition – adult, junior, open and so on.
- The Prize Money, Prizes or Certificates to be awarded in each category.
- The Entry Fee, if any, and the correct name to make the cheque out to.
- Length required – for example, one poem of up to 50 lines, a short story of no more than 3500 words.
- Whether the work must not have been published,

broadcast or performed or have been a prizewinner in another competition.

- Qualifications for entry – eg: New Zealand resident, age, novice/professional, previously published author, etc.
- Requirements for presentation of the manuscript – usually, typed in 10 – 12 point type on one side of an A4 page, double or 1-1/2 line spacing, and wide margins. For entries of more than one page the requirement is often that the title of the piece and the page number are affixed to each page. Usually the author's name should not appear on the manuscript but be sent on a covering page together with the contact details.
- Organisers prefer entries to be sent flat, not folded.
- Maximum number of entries per author.
- Whether each entry must come with a separate form and whether photocopied forms are acceptable.
- Closing date for receipt of entries – or latest post-mark date acceptable.
- The names of the judge/s and any preliminary judge/s. These, especially the name of the main judge, should always be announced in advance of entries being solicited.
- When, how and where results will be notified.
- Whether winners will be notified before any prize-giving function. If prizewinners/placegetters are invited to attend, it should be made clear whether or not their fares will be paid.
- Whether entries and any judge's report will be returned by a given date if accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. (Suggested maximum time – within one month after the announcement of results).
- The copyright of all work must remain with the author.
- First publication rights for winning entries may be retained for a limited time by the competition organiser. There may be payment attached to this but usually it is stated as part of the prize. It pays to get this clarified with the organiser before entering.
- Publication payment (if any) for any entries which have not won a prize should be negotiated with the author. This also should be checked out before entering the competition.
- Organisers may also state that:

- a) manuscripts may not be submitted to a publisher or another competition until results have been announced;
- b) that the judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into;
- c) and that the author should sign a statement that the work is original and has not been previously published, broadcast or performed.

Judge's selection

Preliminary judges should be experienced in the genre they are judging – that is, they should have been writing, editing or teaching in the genre for a number of years.

Final judges should also be experienced in the genre they are judging and each should have a reasonably high profile as a writer in New Zealand.

The New Zealand Society of Authors (PEN NZ Inc) can assist organisers with a list of judges.

Judge's report

The judge should be asked to write a report and should be advised that this will be sent to entrants.

This should include an overview of the entries and their quality; any general errors or flaws in the presentation and content of the entries, also things that were done well. There should be a paragraph or two on the reasons for choosing the winning entries.

Queries on Competitions

If you have any queries on the running of competitions, their rules and conditions of entry, or the results, please contact the NZSA (PEN NZ Inc) office and we will attempt to answer them.

Tips for entering competitions

Organisers get frustrated when writers don't follow the requirements of entry. In order to ensure your entry has the best chance of success here is a checklist:

- When sending in a self-addressed stamped envelope for an entry form make sure it is of sufficient size, usually DL size.
- When sending in your entry make sure the envelope has the correct postage on it to ensure there are no delays in the entry being received.
- Don't forget to include the entry form and a self-addressed stamped envelope, if required, for the results and/or return of the entry.